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24 January 1955

Current Food Situation in Albania, ORR Project 21.652

1. As per your request the reply to Subject project has been arranged in a question and answer form as follows:

a. Current information on Albania's food conditions; any indications of Albania's food shortages and/or famine.

ans. Although no firm quantitative estimates have been made of the 1954 agricultural production and availability of food in Albania there is reason to believe that the production of grains as well as other food crops should be equal to last year. The weather was favorable for both development and harvest of crops during the 1953-54 agricultural year. The production of major crops in 1953 as compared with prewar was as follows in thousands of metric tons:

	<u>1933-37 av.</u>	<u>1953</u>
Wheat	45.0	103.0
Rye	4.0	3.3
Barley	6.0	8.5
Oats	10.0	9.5
Corn	127.0	125.0
Rice	-	4.0
Sugar beets	-	53.7
Potatoes	2.0	3.6

Statements by Albanian officials have given no indication of a food shortage for the current consumption year or a short fall in agricultural production. The third quarter plan results for 1954 showed that aside from corn and potatoes, the sowing plan for bread grains (wheat and rye) and vegetables was overfulfilled; corn planting plan was fulfilled by 98.3 percent and potatoes by 98.8 percent. At the end of October it was officially announced that collections of wheat and corn were satisfactory.

Even Hoxha, in a speech November 28, 1954, claimed that the 1954 wheat production was 180.8 percent more than in 1938. This would calculate to be a production of 109.5 thousand tons, or slightly higher than 1953.

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Therefore, based on the above discussion there is no reason to believe that there is presently an abnormal food shortage in Albania. It should be pointed out that except for East Germany, Albania is the only European satellite that has not eliminated rationing. The Party press and refugee reports have consistently complained that even ration card holders are unable at times to obtain such staples as bread, rice, sugar, cheese, milk, and vegetable oil. This has been a normal situation since the Communists took over the country. It is believed that the food consumption years (July-June) 1950-51 and 1952-53 were worse than the present.

b. Types and amount of food being supplied Albania by Orbit countries including China.

ans. Albanian food imports consist primarily of grains with smaller quantities of sugar, starch, and coffee. In 1953-54 Albania imported approximately 100,000 tons of grain (80 percent wheat) compared to an average 24,000 tons for the prewar period 1936-38. Bulgaria has been supplying approximately 50 percent of the grain imports while Rumania and the USSR supply the balance. In December 1954 Communist China granted Albania a gift of 20,000 tons of wheat, 2,000 tons of rice, and 2,000 tons of sugar. It is estimated that Bulgaria and the USSR will continue to export sizeable quantities of grain to Albania to fulfill her requirements during 1954-55.

c. Albania's food habits; what are the staple items in their diet.

ans. The national diet is simple in character, made up largely of cereals (represent 75 percent of total caloric intake) meat, vegetables, fruit in season, olive oil, and sheep's milk. Pork meat and fats, and wine are not in demand since approximately 70 percent of the population is Moslem. Corn (maize) is eaten by the rural population, while wheat bread is normally consumed by the urban and coastal populations.

The prewar average daily food consumption in terms of calories was estimated to be approximately 2,000 calories and in 1953-54 it was 1,900 calories. As compared to prewar there is more wheat bread being consumed, but less animal protein and vegetable fats. The diet has not only

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decreased in total calories but also in quality. In the less prosperous regions and among the poorer classes, consumption is below the 1,900 calories and as in prewar, starvation is not uncommon, especially in poor harvest years.

d. Which items among the staples are in relatively short supply?

ans. Vegetable oils and fats have been in short supply for several years. There is no indication that the Soviet Bloc has supplied any in recent years. Meat and sugar consumption has also been below prewar levels and the economic demand has probably increased with expansion of the industrial population. Although there may be periodic shortages of bread, it is estimated that stocks and imports of grain are sufficient to cover requirements for 1954-55. Transportation and the bureaucratic complexity of the government hampers effective distribution of foodstuffs. As a result peasants in the northern part of the country may suffer serious shortages of bread before spring if the corn crop was below normal *as presently in the north* estimated.

e. What areas in Albania, if any, are most affected by food shortages?

ans. Normally the administrative district of Tirane is seriously deficient in foodstuffs especially grain. It depends upon the main agricultural producing districts of Korce Durazzo, and Berat, together with foreign imports for grain requirements. Other critical districts include Kukes in the Northeast and Shkoder in the Northwest. The normally low foodstuffs available in the other districts are partially offset by reduced standards of consumption and greater reliance on wild game, nuts, and home grown fruits and vegetables. Since bread is the main staple of the peasant diet, in years of poor harvests he probably suffers more than the urban population who normally are supplied from imports. However, other foods such as milk, meat, eggs, and vegetables would be in shorter supply in the cities than villages.

f. How much of the food in short supply would be a reasonable amount to offer?

ans. To increase per capita availabilities to prewar levels the following amounts of foodstuffs would be required:

- (1) Vegetable oils - 3,000 to 5,000 metric tons
- (2) Mutton and goat meat - 5,000 metric tons

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2. The limited sources available for supplying information on the Albanian agricultural production and food situation prevent giving a detailed and accurate picture. Therefore the above information is submitted with many reservations.

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